



Ahwatukee planning advisory board grows to 19

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The Arizona Republic

Apr. 25, 2007 11:34 AM

The Ahwatukee Foothills Village Planning Committee and Phoenix Councilman Greg Stanton work hand-in-hand to keep the unique area growing the way residents want.

The 19-member committee includes many appointed by Stanton, who represents Ahwatukee.

An advisory group, the committee talks about rezoning issues, recommended changes on trail maps, the proposed South Mountain Freeway and other topics that impact residents' way of life.

Stanton served on the volunteer committee before he became a councilman, and he said the group's opinions impact him greatly. He recently thanked committee members for their work at a special meeting, then talked to them about the proposed South Mountain Freeway at a regular meeting earlier this week.

"I really view the village (committee) as a strong voice for the Ahwatukee Foothills community," Stanton said. "I really look to them for their advice."

When prompted by the committee, he gave it advice on how to edit a letter to Mayor James Cavanaugh of Goodyear, chairman of the Maricopa Association of Governments Regional Council, Gov. Janet Napolitano, state legislators and congressmen about the proposed freeway. The committee plans to send the officials letters expressing the community's concerns and raising questions about the proposed Pecos Road alignment.

The committee makes recommendations on whether property should be rezoned, among other issues, though the City Council has final say in those matters, Stanton said. The committee does not make suggestions on businesses that want to build in areas in which they already meet the existing zoning, he said.

The committee voted to support updating the trails map in Ahwatukee, part of the city's general plan, during Monday's meeting.

Committee member Alan Southergill, who joined the committee in November, said he believes the committee's role is to "listen to the citizens in the neighborhood of Ahwatukee and to gather information and make suggestions to the city of Phoenix."

"We feel special because of the uniqueness of our area," Southergill said.

The committee can help Ahwatukee "feel like its own neighborhood and feel like it's connected to Phoenix proper," he added.

John Jurik, appointed to the committee in February, said the goal is to maintain a "quality of life that the people of Ahwatukee expect."

Jurik, Jill Harris, Rob Robinson and Heidi Fischer were appointed to the committee earlier this year. Harris expects to participate in her first meeting as a member next month after she is sworn in.

As a committee member, she said she hopes to promote smart development in Ahwatukee, addressing environmental concerns.

"I want to get as involved in the community as possible," Harris said. "I was happy to become part of this."

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